

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 067 843

EM 010 256

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TITLE Needed: Evaluation Criteria for the Community College Broadcasting Education Program.
INSTITUTION East Texas State Univ., Commerce.
PUB DATE 72
NOTE 14p.
EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.65 HC-\$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Broadcast Industry; *College Programs; *Community Colleges; *Evaluation Criteria; Guidelines; *Mass Media; Radio; Television

ABSTRACT

At present it is difficult to evaluate broadcasting education programs because of a lack of suitable criteria integral to the broadcasting discipline itself. A set of criteria are suggested here. They are: 1) an identifiable local need for a community college broadcasting education program does exist; 2) a viable broadcasting education industry advisory committee is in operation at the community college; 3) the program undergoes continuous self-evaluation; 4) the faculty should combine higher education and broadcast industry work experience; 5) the faculty salaries are high enough to attract qualified personnel; 6) facilities and equipment are adequate to meet the needs of the program; 7) counseling and placement services are provided; 8) the learning resources center is able to meet student needs; 9) students receive credit for off-campus station internship experience; 10) the college integrates its programs with the offerings of other colleges; 11) the college provides equal educational opportunity, and 12) the program has the potential for balance between general and occupational education. Guidelines relating to these criteria are also stated. (JK)

ED 067843

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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NEEDED: EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE BROADCASTING EDUCATION PROGRAM

Tom Ball

"In a very real sense, the efficiency of a college or university today cannot be measured until half a century hence, when today's students will have played their roles in life. But the public cannot wait fifty years for a report on which to base this year's decisions." (1:84)

As academic programs at the community college level have expanded from the original limited university parallel courses to the present multi-program offerings, so too have pressures from the various legislative and public bodies increased to evaluate adequately each new program to determine whether or not identified needs and stated goals and objectives are being met. One program which particularly merits such an examination is broadcasting education.

In these present times of social discontinuity, promulgated and intensified by the rapidly expanding impact of our modern communications industry, the influence broadcasters exert upon society is receiving increased attention. Of late, this attention is shifting, particularly among members of the broadcasting profession itself, to considerations of the adequacy and appropriateness of available broadcast education programs to prepare future broadcasters to assume their important professional and societal roles.

At present, however, it is difficult to evaluate broadcasting education programs because of a lack of suitable criteria integral to the broadcasting discipline itself. We are unsure how to go about assessing whether or not broadcasting education programs are providing students with a broad general education while, at the same time, preparing them for employment in an

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industry which requires highly trained workers possessing specific technical skills. Nor are we certain how to determine whether or not adequate provisions are being made for individual differences in aptitudes, abilities, and interests among the students as they enter and progress through the program.

In 1968 the National Association of Broadcasters, in conjunction with the American Association of Junior Colleges, developed a statement of objectives for a two-year broadcasting curriculum. Part of that statement is pertinent here:

The primary objective of the program is to establish a curriculum that provides for a broad general education, courses that will instruct the student in the basic phases of broadcast operations, and technical courses necessary for qualification as a broadcast technician.

(Another) objective of the program, where applicable, is to provide a curriculum of sufficient depth and scope so that in the event a student who has completed the two-year program desires to continue his education, an extension of his training at a four-year college can be accomplished, with a maximum transfer of credits.

A goal of this proposed curriculum is to develop young men and women who are not only well trained technically, but who are equipped with a good general education so they can perform effectively in the broadcasting industry. (2)

Unfortunately, suggested criteria suitable to ascertain whether or not these goals and objectives are being achieved did not accompany the NAB-AAJC statement. Needed are evaluative criteria based on factors essential to a sound broadcasting education program, that will allow interested students, broadcasting industry representatives, community and senior college broadcast educators and others, to at least begin to base discussion of these objectives on a common set of standards in order to work out alternative approaches to their achievement.

NEED

The first factor which might be considered essential to a sound broadcasting education program on the community college level calls for the demonstration of an existing local need for such a program. Indeed, much of the impetus for developing the community college itself as a separate institutional form arose from the desire to create an institution of higher education that could and would be responsive to local needs.

Criterion 1

An identifiable local need for a community college broadcasting education program does exist.

This criterion can be investigated through utilization of the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): The community college accepts the principle of basing its broadcast education program on demonstrated local needs.

Guideline (2): The community college has gathered sufficient evidence to document and substantiate the local need for a broadcast education program.

Guideline (3): The documented local need appears great enough to warrant the existence of the broadcast education program.

BROADCAST INDUSTRY OCCUPATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The utility of occupational advisory committees, along with their suggested composition, function, and scope of activities, has been amply demonstrated in the literature. As Riendeau states, such a committee:

- a. Serves as a communication channel between college and community occupational groups;
- b. Lists the specific skills and suggests related and technical information for the courses;
- c. Recommends competent personnel from business and industry as potential instructors;
- d. Helps evaluate the program of instruction;

- e. Suggests ways for improving the public relations program at the community college;
- f. Assists in recruiting, providing internships and in placing qualified graduates in appropriate jobs;
- g. Keeps the college informed on changes in the labor market, specific needs, and surpluses, etc.;
- h. Provides means for the college to inform the community of occupational programs; and
- i. Assesses program needs in terms of the entire community. (3:28)

Several of the most commonly occurring situations in which the recommendations and services of broadcast advisory committees could be useful include: equipping and furnishing instructional facilities, reviewing and recommending changes in curriculua, selecting and placing students, and participating in various phases of follow up studies. It is in these areas that the advisory committee can be of material assistance to the successful operation of the occupational education program.

Criterion 2

A viable broadcasting education industry advisory committee is in operation at the community college.

The quality of this committee's input can be investigated through utilization of the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): The composition of this committee appears appropriate to meet the needs and objectives of the program.

Guideline (2): The range of activities engaged in by the committee appears broad enough to allow committee input into all phases of the program.

Guideline (3): The committee does in fact meet frequently on a regular basis.

ON-GOING SELF-EVALUATION PROGRAM

"As the community college attempts to meet the needs of the local citizenry, it more nearly lives up to its descriptive name." (4:41). One of the most appropriate means to evidence a commitment to meet a demonstrated local need is with an on-going program of self-evaluation activities. If the institution is honest in its stated desire to offer superior educational curricula that are relevant to an ever-changing world, such integrity can easily be made visible through its own self-evaluation efforts.

Criterion 3

The Community college broadcasting education program undergoes continuous self-evaluation.

The self-evaluation program should be of sound design and should encompass a sufficient range of measures and techniques to ensure that all appropriate data are uncovered. The extent to which such activities take place can be investigated by utilizing the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): Follow-up studies are conducted periodically, and the results are made available to interested parties.

Guideline (2): Appropriate student evaluation of the broadcast education program is undertaken frequently and the results are made available to students.

Guideline (3): The community college provides clerical and financial support to the student body in order to assist in student evaluation efforts.

FACULTY

Recognizing that a good faculty is the key to a successful broadcast education program on the community college level, the training, education, and professional work experience of the faculty are of primary importance. While advanced degrees are beneficial, graduate education alone is not enough. Needed

is a blend of higher education and a wide range of broadcast industry work experience. Indeed, when hiring faculty to teach production courses, if a choice must be made between emphasis on education beyond the baccalaureate degree or emphasis on extensive industry work experience, the latter should receive strong consideration.

When attempting to foster high student levels of skills acquisition, the dictum "there is no teacher like experience" seems appropriate. In production courses "talking" will not suffice; the instructor must be able to demonstrate the required level of proficiency. Of necessity in the broadcasting industry, when operational proficiency is lacking, quality suffers. Proficiency in broadcasting production skills comes only with the practice born of experience. Salaries must be adequate to attract teachers with appropriate work experience, education, and training.

Criterion 4

The broadcast education faculty should evidence a blend of higher education and broadcasting industry work experience.

Guideline (1): All but a few broadcast education faculty members possess at least a bachelors degree; most possess masters degrees or higher.

Guideline (2): All broadcast education faculty members have several years of work experience in the communications industry.

Criterion 5

Broadcasting faculty salaries appear adequate to attract qualified personnel.

Guideline (1): Broadcasting education faculty salaries are at or above local market scale for comparable employment in industry.

Guideline (2): Broadcasting education faculty salaries compare favorably with salaries paid in other educational disciplines.

FACILITIES

Guidelines on appropriate facilities for community college broadcast education programs are presently nonexistent. Inquiries to such organizations as Broadcasting Magazine, the National Association of Broadcasters, National Association of Educational Broadcasters, American Association of Junior Colleges, and the Florida Association of Broadcasters all received negative responses.

While much exists in the literature to aid in construction ¹ of on-the-air capabilities and standards, these are not always required for the operation of a successful broadcast education program.

The normally applied "so many square feet of academic space per student" type of formulae are not appropriate to occupational programs in general. Each occupation, due to the nature of the tasks performed and the equipment used, requires space unique to its own capabilities and limitations. The same is true for broadcast education programs. Foremost among the many special facilities required is the need for a large, open room with a smooth floor and a high ceiling to use as a studio. The ceiling must be high enough to hang studio lights from a permanent metal grid. The floor must be extremely level to permit smooth camera work. The air conditioning must be extra heavy to compensate for the heat given off from the studio lights and electronic equipment. Walls must be acoustically treated and soundproofed to block out unwanted noise and outside vibration. The control room, prop storage, and equipment repair areas should be conveniently located near the studio. Due to rapid technological obsolescence, much of the equipment, though not all of it, should be of modern vintage and as similar to that used in local industry as economically possible.

This brief recitation of special facilities and equipment needs is not intended to be exhaustive. It is merely illustrative of the kinds of facilities

and equipment considerations that must be taken into account in the planning and operation of a community college broadcast education program.

Criterion 6

Facilities and equipment should be adequate to meet the needs and objectives of the broadcast education program.

Assistance in determining if this criterion is being applied in the community college broadcast education program can be obtained by utilization of the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): A written statement of objectives exists for the broadcast education program.

Guideline (2): Evidence is available indicating a general awareness of the genre of facilities and equipment extant in the broadcasting industry.

Guideline (3): The particular facilities and equipment needed to meet the stated objectives and goals of the broadcast education program have been identified.

Guideline (4): An adequate search was undertaken to locate and obtain suitable facilities and equipment before the program was implemented.

Guideline (5): The facilities presently utilized for the broadcast education program have been specifically altered or constructed in such a manner as to facilitate achievement of the stated objectives.

Guideline (6): Equipment used in the broadcast education program is similar to that used in local industry.

Guideline (7): Managerial data on such items as equipment down-time and repair costs are available for comparison with other community college broadcast education programs and with similar equipment in local industry.

STUDENT PERSONNEL SERVICES

Pre-program counseling and post-program placement are two of the most important services available to the college student. Counseling is necessary to assist the student in choosing the correct educational program in terms of his individual capabilities and desires, as well as providing a realistic

assessment of available and expected opportunities for employment and/or upper-division transfer. Placement assistance is necessary to aid the graduate in finding suitable employment or in transferring to a suitable upper-division education program at a senior institution. Both of these services are indispensable to the operation of a sound broadcast education program at the community college level.

Criterion 7

Counseling and placement services are provided broadcast education students.

The necessity to examine student counseling and placement service gives rise to the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): Procedures exist to ensure that every broadcast education student is counseled prior to enrolling in the program.

Guideline (2): Data are available indicating the number of graduates who transfer to upper-division broadcast education programs at senior institutions and the percentage of those who received counseling and/or placement assistance.

Guideline (3): Data are available indicating the number of graduates who were placed on broadcast related jobs, and the percentage of those who received counseling and/or placement assistance.

Guideline (4): Data are available indicating the number and frequency of broadcast employer contacts by community college representatives regarding student employment and placement.

SUPPORT RESOURCES

Learning Resources Center

In the early developmental stages of societal evolution, knowledge was passed on from elder to younger, father to son, mother to daughter, by word of mouth. It remained for the recorded word to make truly effective transmission of knowledge possible. In modern times the learning resources center has been accepted as the repository of knowledge on the college campus. Students in all educational programs, both transfer and terminal, are expected to go to

that repository to interact with what others have transmitted. This is also true for broadcast education students. It requires that the learning resources center be adequate to meet the needs of these students. It is on these bases that the eighth criterion is constructed.

Criterion 8

The learning resources center serving the community college is of a size and diversity to meet the needs of students in the broadcast education program.

The extent to which the learning resources center is involved in the broadcast education program can be examined through the utilization of the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): A variety of broadcast related publications and instructional materials are on deposit in the learning resources center.

Guideline (2): Assignments given by the broadcast education faculty require frequent use of the learning resources center.

Internship

The wide acceptance given the internship experience is amply demonstrated by the many college level programs which require or offer such activities. The medical and educational professions are two immediate examples. The applicability of the internship experience to broadcast education programs is easily envisioned. Many institutions of higher education, such as the University of Miami, already offer credit for off-campus internship experience in educational or commercial broadcasting stations. Similar experience should also be accepted for credit by community colleges.

Criterion 9

Community college broadcast education students receive credit for off-campus educational or commercial broadcast station internship experience.

The strength of the community colleges' commitment to provide a suitable internship experience to every broadcast education student can be examined through utilization of the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): Local broadcast stations regularly receive community college contact concerning the internship program.

Guideline (2): Local broadcast stations, in conjunction with the community college, make internship positions available to advanced students in the broadcast education program.

Guideline (3): At least one such internship experience is required before a certificate or diploma can be granted to students majoring in the broadcast education program.

ARTICULATION ACTIVITIES

The need for articulation has grown, commensurate with the dramatic growth of community colleges themselves. While articulation could be largely ignored, or at least given minor attention in the past, this is no longer the case today. Formerly community colleges were limited in what they could offer by what the senior colleges would accept in their own university parallel programs. With the extension of the concept of equal educational opportunity for all to higher education, the diversity of the student body has mandated a corresponding diversity in program offerings. More and more youngsters are going on to upper-division programs and the diversity of their backgrounds and initial higher education preparation is causing difficulty when they reach the senior institutions. Often courses taken at the community college level do not transfer, time is lost, and neither the senior colleges nor the students are pleased with the situation.

Criterion 10

The community college engages in an on-going program of articulation with other community and senior colleges offering broadcast education programs in the state.

As the community colleges enroll an ever larger share of the students who seek post-secondary education, articulation takes on added importance. The extent to which the community colleges fulfill their responsibilities in this area can be examined through utilization of the following guidelines.

- Guideline (1):** Responsibility for articulation related to broadcast education courses has been clearly and formally designated by the community college.
- Guideline (2):** This responsibility has been exercised through frequent, periodic articulation meetings with representatives of other educational institutions.
- Guideline (3):** Credit for all community college broadcast education coursework is accepted at other state public colleges and universities.
- Guideline (4):** Community college broadcasting majors are not denied clear admission to upper-division programs as a result of having gone through a community college broadcast education program.

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND TUITION

The following criterion and related guidelines were largely adapted from those constructed by Arney in his community college study (4:38-39). This criterion indicated that any person who might benefit from it should enjoy the opportunity of entering the community college education program of his choice regardless of existing admissions requirements or tuition charges. Should existing educational deficiencies reasonably be assumed sufficient to prevent successful completion of the program, appropriate remedial education should be provided by the college.

In keeping with the concept of equal educational opportunity for all, little or no tuition charges should be levied on broadcast education students at the community college level.

Criterion 11

The community college provides equal educational opportunity in the broadcast education program for all who might benefit from it.

- Guideline (1):** Educational opportunity is available in the community college broadcast education program free of tuition charges.
- Guideline (2):** The community college broadcast education program is open to all persons of post-high school age.

POTENTIAL FOR CURRICULUM BALANCE

While appropriate curriculum balance is difficult to measure, to the extent that a wide range of courses is available, the potential for balance may be observed. Examination of the suggested academic course sequence in the broadcast education program of the community college will indicate whether or not sufficient courses are available to offer such potential. Therefore, the following criterion is constructed.

Criterion 12

The potential for balance between general and occupational education courses exists in the broadcast education program.

Assistance in making this determination can be gained through utilization of the following related guidelines.

Guideline (1): A sufficient number and variety of courses are available to create the potential for curriculum balance in meeting the demonstrated local need for a broadcast education program.

Guideline (2): The community college allows broadcasting majors wide flexibility in course selection to allow for individual differences and needs.

SUMMARY

It is hoped that the preceding criteria and related guidelines, constructed from selected factors essential to a sound broadcast education program on the two-year college level, will be found to be of assistance in the quest for valid measures of educational program evaluation integral to the broadcasting field itself. Some, perhaps, may prove more useful than others.

Regardless of the ultimate utility of these particular criteria, however, the need to develop valid means of evaluation is pressing. The obligation to evaluate all program offerings, broadcasting education included, must be met. Popular concern and legislative pressures for educational evaluation and accountability demand it.

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